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THE CONCEPT OF GOD IN ŚAIVA SIDDHĀNTA

S.N.Kandaswamy

Introduction

The philosophical system of the Tamils, based on the *Śaiva Āgamas, Upaniṣads, Tirumuṟais* and *Meykaṇḍa Śāstras*, is known as *Śaiva Siddhānta. Siddhānta*[1] literally means the established conclusion and, in its extension of meaning, it denotes any system of philosophy. *Śaiva Siddhānta* indicates the philosophy of those who worship Lord Śiva as the Supreme Being. This system of philosophy has been very popular in South India as evidenced from the great temples dedicated to Lord Śiva and the mine of source materials embedded in the Tamil language.[2] It is a living system taking its origin in the Indus Valley Civilization.

As opposed to *Vedānta* (i.e. Conclusion of the *Vedas*), *Śaiva Siddhānta* is called *āgamānta* (i.e. the Conclusion of the *Āgamas*). The primary *Śaiva Āgamas* are twentyeight in number. Early available references to the *Āgamas* are found in the *Sāntiparva* of *Mahābhārata* and Badarayana's *Vedānta Sūtra* (Ramanujachari 1948:2). A.P.Karmarkar (1951:276) is of the opinion that the *Agamas* are older than the *Vedas*. The *Tirumantiram* (500 A.D.) preserves the quintessence of the *Śaiva Āgamas* and it is the earliest extant Tamil treatise on *Śaiva Siddhānta*. The name 'Śaiva Siddhānta' occurs in this text for the first time (*Tirumantiram* 5 : 1 : 3). Tiruñāṇa Campantar (7th century A.D.) extols Lord Śiva as *Ākamac Celvar* 'the Rich One who revealed the *Āgamas*' (*Tēvāram* 6:57:10). He also mentions that the people of Kōkaraṇam professed the faith of *Śaiva Āgamas* (*Tēvāram* 3:79:6).[3] His contemporary Saint Tirunāvukkaracar points out, in one of his hymns, that the Lord revealed the *Āgamas* to His consort, beneath the *marutam* tree in the shrine at Tiruviṭaimarutūr (*Tēvāram* 5:15:4). Cuntarar (8th century A.D.) praises the Lord as the Ancient One who revealed the *Āgamas* to the celestials (*Tēvāram* 7:84:8). He also refers in one of his last hymns to the chanting of *Śivanāma* by those who were well-versed in the *Āgamas* (*Tēvāram* 7:100:8). In one of his inscriptions, Rājasiṁha Pallava (691-729 A.D.) is mentioned as *ākamappiriyaṉ* 'lover of *Āgamas*' and *caiva cittāntattiṟ pēraṟivu uṭaiyavaṉ* 'one who has immense knowledge in *Śaiva Siddhānta*' (Racamanikkanar 1956:152-3; Mahalingam 1968:123). References to *Agamas* are many in *Tiruvaccakam* (*Tiruvaccakam* 1.4, 2.9-10, 17-20)[4] In this work, the author Maṇikkavacakar (800-900 A.D.) mentions that the Lord revealed the *Āgamas* to

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His consort, in the Mount Mahendra.[5] He has also indicated the superiority of the *Āgamas* over the *Vedas* in the *Civapurāṇam*, the preface to *Tiruvācakam* (*Tiruvācakam* 1 : 1 4). In the opening portion of this hymn, he says that the Lord Himself is the *Āgama* conferring the bliss on His votaries. In a subsequent passage of the same hymn, he declares that the Lord transcends the triple dimensions of height, breadth and depth untouched by the *Vedas* assuming the subtlest form (*Tiruvācakam*, 34-5). References to the *Āgamas* in the *Meykaṇṭa Śāstras* are many.[6]

The *Śaiva Siddhānta* is mainly the outcome of *Āgamic* tradition. But, this does not mean that it rejects the Vedic tradition.[7] The *Vedas* are held to be the general source for almost all the systems of Indian philosophy, including *Śaiva Siddhānta*. The *Āgamas* form the special source for this system. Most of the *Āgamas* contain four portions dealing with *cāriya*, *kriya*, *yoga* and *ñāna*. It is essential to note that the (*Piṅkalamtai Nikaṇṭu* (800 A.D.), a metrical lexicon in Tamil, categorically states that *Āgama* means *ñana*[8] (*Piṅkalam* 236). From this, it may be understood that the *ñāna* portion of the *Āgamas* is very significant as it actually deals with the basic principles of *Śaiva Siddhānta*.

Chronologically speaking, the *Śaṅgam* classics (300 B.C. to 300 A.D.) are older than the *Tirumuṟais* (500 A.D.-1200 A.D.) and the *Meykaṇṭa Śāstras* (c.A.D. 1200-1400). They bear ample testimony to the spiritual supremacy of Lord Siva.[9] Some of the principles of *Śaiva Siddhānta* are traceable to them. In the Buddhist Tamil epic, *Maṇimēkalai* (2 7 : 8 6 - 9 5) (5th-6th Centuries A.D.), there is a chapter that deals with the various schools of Indian philosophy which were current during the period of its author, Cāttaṇār. Among them, the Śaiva system is also included. The exponent of this system is known as *Śaiva vati* (one who debates or argues for the cause of Śaivism) and through him Cāttanār expressed some of the doctrines of *Saiva Siddhānta*. It is interesting to note that Mādhva (1238 A.D.) in his *Sarvadarśana Samgraha* (ch.VII) presented the principles of *Śaiva Siddhānta* under the caption *Śaivadarśana*.

The heyday of *Śaiva Siddhānta* is the period of the imperial Cōḷas. The temples, being the centre of arts and religion, were constructed in accordance with the prescriptions of the *Śaiva Āgamas*. *Ñāṉāmirutam* (12th century A.D.), a classical text on *Śaiva Siddhānta* was written by Vākica Muṉivar in the style of *Śaṅgam* Tamil.[10] Subsequently, two more works viz., *Tiruvuntiyār* and *tirukkaḷiṟṟuppaṭiyār* were composed respectively by Uyyavantatēvar of Tiruviyalūr and of Tirukkaṭavūr. Then commences the renowned *Meykaṇṭār* school of *Śaiva Siddhānta*.

Meykaṇṭar (13th century A.D.) is highly esteemed as the first systematic exponent of the *Siddhānta* philosophy. His immortal treatise *Civaṅāṉapōtam* and its metrical commentary *Civaṅāṉa Cittiyār* by his disciple Arunanticivam form the foundational bedrock upon which the edifice of the existing *Śaiva Siddhānta* is erected. Another great exponent Umāpaticivam (14th century A.D.), the disciple of Maraiñāṉa Campantar, nurtured the system by his contribution of eight works on this subject.[11] Among them, *Tiruvaruṭpayaṉ* and *Tiruvarutpayan*

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are held in high esteem. Civañāṇa Muṉivar (1800 A.D.), the commentator of the *Siddhānta* canonical works, is respected as the 'official' interpreter of the system.

Śaiva Siddhānta is a theistic philosophy. It deals with both religion and philosophy. It is also known as pluralistic realism, since it accepts more than one reality to be eternal entities. It deals with the three eternal realities, viz., *pati*, *pasu* and *pāsa*. All categories that are perceived and conceived are brought under these three. *Pati* indicates the Supreme Lord. *Pasu* denotes the myriad souls. *Pāsa* refers to the triple bonds of *āṇava*, *karma* and *māya*. All the three realities are ever-existing. Like God, *pasu* and *pāsa* are not created. Among the three, *pati* alone is independent, omnipresent, omniscient and omnipotent. The soul's faculties are restricted and constricted from the very beginning due to its envelopment by the root evil, *āṇava*. In order to eliminate this evil, the Lord, out of His mercy, creates the world from *māya*, the primordial matter and provides the desolated souls with the necessary equipment just to enable them to engage in activities with the ultimate purpose of casting away the evil and to gain eternal union with Him.

With this background, an attempt is being made here to outline the concept of God as found in *Śaiva Siddhānta*. Only after having understood the existence of God, one would aspire to know about His nature in order to develop a sense of devotion to realise and reach Him. First, let us consider the important proofs for His existence.

Proofs for the Existence of God

Śaiva Siddhānta is firmly rooted on revelation. Like all other theistic schools, it gives due importance to scripture to prove the existence of God. The biography and literature of the *Śaiva Nāyaṉmārs* disclose the fact that they came into direct communion with God. For them, God was not a subject of investigation, but an object of experience. Their personal experience with the Lord is beautifully portrayed in the emotional outpourings of their devotional literature. But there are some systems of Indian philosophy which do not accept verbal testimony as a valid source of knowledge. To them, citations from the religious hymns do not carry any weight. God is held to be transcending all limits of our knowledge. He is supersensuous. So, sense-perception is naturally to be eliminated to prove His existence. Some other means acceptable to both the parties are to be sought. Inference is admitted as a sound source of valid knowledge by all systems except Carvaka. So, the exponents of *Śaiva Siddhānta* endeavour to establish the existence of God through inference that leads one from the seen to the unseen.

Cosmological argument

Vākīcamuṉivar, the author of *Ñāṉāmirutam* (57:1-3) presents *cosmological* argument based on inference to prove the existence of God. According to this argument, the aggregation of the gross elements commencing from earth and various objects like mountains that constitute the universe should have a creator, because these components are products without comparison. The example given to support the proposition is that of a pot. The syllogism of this argument requires some elucidation. A product is one which is subject to division and which undergoes changes. Each

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one of the contents of the phenomenal world is divisible and mutable. Since the products are inert and non-intelligent, they require an all-intelligent being for their division and changes characterised by production, existence and destruction. Since the intelligence of the souls is limited and they get the knowledge only after getting a body, they could not effect the changes and classification all by themselves. Any product for its inception requires the co-operation of three causes, viz., the material cause, the instrumental or auxiliary cause and the efficient cause, as evidenced from the empirical experience. For the production of a pot, clay is the material cause, the potter's wheel and other instruments are the auxiliary cause, while the potter is the efficient cause. The world is a product and its production also involves three causes. *Māyā*, the primordial matter, is the material cause. Śiva's inseparable Śakti and the root *karma* of the souls form the auxiliary cause, while Śiva Himself is the Efficient Cause. Śiva through the instrumentality of His Śakti causes the universe to emerge from *Māyā*.

According to *Śaiva Siddhānta*, God does not create the souls or the primordial matter which are eternal like Himself. Eternity does not mean equality. Just like the potter who cannot create clay but can effect only the pot, so also the Lord creates only the manifested world and not its primal core, i.e. *māyā* which is ever existing. In *Śaiva Siddhānta*, creation means the *kāraṇa rūpa* (i.e. the causal form of *māyā*) assuming the *kārya rūpa* (i.e. the effected form of *māyā*), while destruction means the *kārya rūpa* returning to its original state of *kāraṇa rūpa*. There is no complete destruction. *Kārya rūpa* is fleeting and ephemeral, while *kāraṇa rūpa* is a reality.

Though the *cosmological* argument attempts to prove the existence of God, it is not free from defects. Standing from the side of a novice, the author of *Ñāṉāmirutam* finds some flaws in the theory of causation. The first remark is as follows (*Ñāṉāmirutam* 57:4-8):

A man, who has noticed the co-presence of a pot and its maker at one place, notices only the pots at a different place and not their maker. His previous knowledge of concomitance of the potter and the pot educates him in the second instance to infer that there should be a potter, even though he was not seen there. But with reqard to the universe, if one has ever seen the creator and the universe existing side by side, then if he happens to witness a different universe without the presence of its maker, he could very well infer the existence of its author. This riddle is resolved by the author through an illustration (*Ñāṉāmrutam* 57:9-18). A person observes the concomitance of a small column of smoke and fire in a kitchen and similar places. In a different situation, he happens to notice a large column of smoke on the summit of a mountain. It is reasonable for him to infer the existence of a large fire in the invisible part of the mountain. Despite the difference in the volume of smoke, the common feature in both cases' being smoke, which is always concomitant with its cause viz., fire, forms the symbol of inference. If it is admitted that the world is a product, then there is little hesitation to account for its creator. Whether the product is a small one

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like the pot or a stupendous one like the universe, it requires a producer. Further, it is to be understood that analogy is always partial and one should not read complete agreement between the objects of comparison and objects compared. The purpose of the above comparison is to indicate that every product, whether it is small or big, requires a causal agency and to exhibit the known in order to infer the unknown.

However, the reality of God cannot be grasped completely by cold logic or subtle philosophical theories which only provide the clue to the understanding of the absolute reality.

The second remark *(Ñāṇāmrutam* 57:19-20) is with regard to the nature of ether which is incorporeal *(arūpa)* and hence would not be a product, even through it forms part of the universe. But, Vākīcamuṉivar rejects this view stating that even ether is undoubtedly a product, since a product is characterised by its quality and ether has sound for its quality. Further, the sound potential, being an aspect of ether, is mingled in the remaining four gross elements (i.e. air, fire, water and earth). For this reason, these elements are said to be the constituent members of ether. So, ether is divisible. What is divisible should be a product. Since these products have origination, they are subject to decay and their changes account for an efficient cause *(Ñāṇāmrutam* 57:21-3).

The Meykaṇṭar School

The *cosmological* argument advanced by Vākīcamuṉivar is further developed in the *Meykaṇḍar* school, as noticed in *Civañāṇa pōtam (ciṟṟurai* 1981:8-20) and *Civañāṇa Cittiyār* (1:1-17). The first aphorism in *Civañāṇa pōtam* purports to prove the existence of God through *analogical* reasoning.

The world is inert and non-intelligent. It undergoes three operative functions viz., production, maintenance and destruction. Among the three, through the first two functions it assumes *sthūlarūpa* (i.e concrete, visible form), while through the last one, it resolves into its original *sūkṣmarūpa* (subtle, invisible form). Since the world is inert, it cannot dissovle into its causal form and also it cannot manifest again all by itself. So, the reality of the phenomenal world comes out of the ground of God whither it is resolved and whence it re-emerges. The reason for the dissolution is to give rest to the wearied souls and for the recreation is to enable them to exhaust their *āṇava*. The cosmic changes could be effected only by one who is changeless. From the seen world, the reality of its author viz., the unseen God, is to be inferred.

The first aphorism, like the rest, is terse and cryptic. It contains three parts known as *adhikaraṇa*, each of which is formulated in a syllogistic form. Let us consider them one by one.

First Adhikaraṇa (Part I)

The proposition or thesis (i.e. *pratijñā* or *svapakṣa)* is that the phenomenal world, identified as he, she and it, undergoes three fold changes viz., production, maintenence and destruction.

The *prima facie* view or antithesis *(pūrvapakṣa* or *parapakṣa)* questions

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the validity of the above statement raising the doubt whether the universe undergoes the aforesaid changes.

This member of the syllogism represents the view of the opposing systems. The *Lokāyatas* of the Non-Vedic group and the *Mimamsakas* of the Vedic group envisage that the world is eternal and it is improper to state that it suffers changes and for this reason it requires an intelligent agent known as God.

The rejoinder to this objection to pass for a conclusion is known as *Siddhānta* which is supported by two other members viz., reason and example. To establish the original proposition, the following three reasons are adduced by the *Śaiva Siddhāntin.*

1. The sense-perceived universe is made up of various parts. It is a composite whole. A composite is conditioned by a cause or causes. The component parts that constitute the universe are conveniently classified on the principle of gender, i.e., masculine, feminine and neuter. A particular object in the universe is a 'he' or 'she' or it'. 'He' or 'she' denotes only the physical features of the sentient beings for there is no gender in the soul, while 'it' indicates the inorganic and non-sentient beings. This sort of classification or division, regularity and design could not be self-made. Therefore, it is suggested that there must be a classifier or designer.

2. Each one of the component parts in the entire universe differs from one another. There is difference between two men, two women and two things. There is no sameness even between two homogeneous things. There are innumerable kinds of things belonging to inert matter. Manifoldness and materiality are the significant features of the phenomenal world which could not self-exist. *Śaiva Siddhānta* postulates the difference in the *karma* of the individuals for the difference in their being. There should be an intelligent cause to effect the diversity and mutability of things in the universe.

3. The sense-percieved objects that constitute the visible universe are liable to undergo changes and transformations. That which is cognized through the means of determinate perception is known as *acētaṇapirapañcam* (insentient material universe) which is classified as he, she and it. These things being the object of determinate perception are subject to change. So, the phenomenal world as it appears could not be considered as an entity, since an entity could not be divided into parts, and also it should not suffer change which occurs only in that which is made up of parts.

To sum up, since the phenomenal world is classified into three broad divisions, each of which is manifold and different from one another undergoing transformations and also becoming the subject of determinate perception, there must be an omniscient being to effect the changes.

The example to support the aforestated reasoning is that of a cloth. In the cloth, the manifold inert yarns constitute the warp and woof which, being the component parts of the cloth, suggest the existence of its weaver. The weaver of the universe is God.

This syllogistic inference is admissible only to the *Mīmāmsakas*

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who accepted *anumāna* as a valid source of knowledge. But, the *Lokāyatas* (the Indian materialists) do not accept *anumāna*. Their only source of valid knowledge is perception. In order to convince them, the *Śaiva Siddhāntin* employs *pratyakṣa* (perception) to establish his original proposition viz., that the universe is subject to threefold changes. The adduced reason is as follows:

"Because origin and end lay on the sides of the existing thing". Without origination, the particular thing could not have come into existence. So, existence indicates its previous position of origination, for without origination existence is impossible and inconceivable. It is followed by destruction. Mere observation or perception is enough to instruct the *Lokāyata* that the sense-perceived things undergo threefold changes as mentioned above. Since the component parts are subject to change, the universe being the whole should naturally undergo the same changes. To explain this point, an analogy is given:

A particular kind of plants, fruits or insects appears in a particular season and goes out of existence at the end of it. This process is repeatedly seen. So also, the phenomenal world which is ephemeral comes into existence, stays for some period and again resolves back to its original state.

Second Adhikaraṇa (Part II)

This *adhikaraṇa* is intended for those, especially the *Sāṁkhyas*, who admit that the universe undergoes changes, but do not accept an intelligent agent to effect the changes. The members of the syllogism pertaining to this second part of the argument are the following:

Proposition: 'The world exists'.
Reason: Because there is no origin to that which does not exist.
Example (negative): Like the hare's horn.

In the calf of a cow and in the young one of a hare, the horn is not found. When the calf grows, the horn is seen visibly in its head. But, in the case of the hare, the horn is absent completely at all times. This indicates that which is not, could not come into existence like the hare's horn, and also it implies that what was already there in abstract and unseen form *(sūkṣma)* is evolved into a concrete and visible form *(sthūla)* like the calf's horn. The effect is emanated from its cause in which it existed already implicitly: The essence of effect is not different from its cause. This concept is known as *Satkāryavāda* in *Śaiva Siddhānta*. The rational basis of this concept may be exemplified. From clay, only a pot could be produced and not a cloth. From a timber, a chair could be made and not a jewel. The significant relationship between the cause and effect is to be considered.

The *Satkāryavāda* out of logical necessity postulated the existence of the primordial entity (the material cause) known as *māyā* -- the seed principle out of which the parts that form the universe are evolved and into which they again resolve. *Māyā* is a very subtle entity in which the phenomenal world exists implictly before its manifestation, just like a big banyan tree is latent in a minute, tiny seed, prior to its evolution.

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Next, the *Śaiva Siddhāntin* proceeds to postulate the existence of the efficient cause and instrumental cause. The syllogism for this postulation is as follows:

Proposition: The existing world has a creator.

Reason: Because that which exists could not be produced without a creator.

The *Sāṁkhyas* held that the world would evolve by itself from the primordial matter, and hence no need for a creator. Though they accepted *Satkāryavāda*, they did not accept an efficient cause. The *Śaiva Siddhāntin* points out the defect in their argument and stresses on the necessity of threefold causes for the production of anything that we have already noted. One could amplify the examples. A pot requires a potter, a chair a carpenter and a book, an author. But one cannot question who is the creator of God, for it would lead to infinite regress. That is why the Absolute is depicted in the Tamil devotional literature as one having no father and mother (*cilappatikāram* 5:169, *Tiruvācakam*12:3).

After proving the existence of God, the *Śaiva Siddhāntin* proceeds to propound that the efficient cause should be the Universal Destroyer. The syllogism for this argument follows thus:

Proposition: There is no evolution except in dissolution.

Reason: Because it (the evolved world) becomes dissolved there (in involution)

Even if one accepts the efficient cause for the creation of the world, views differ with regard to the agency in the theistic schools. The *Pāñcarātras* held that the protecting agent, Vāsudeva should be the efficient cause, while the *Brahmavādins* maintained in its place the creating agent, Brahma. According to *Śaiva Siddhānta*, these are petty deities and they are only the evolved souls. By virtue of their accumulated merit, they obtained the authority from the Mahādeva (Lord Śiva) to create and to protect. Further, the elements and worlds existing in the five *kalās* viz., *Nivṛtti*, *Pratiṣṭhā*, *Vidyā*, *Śānti* and *Śāntiyatīta* are respectively absorbed by Brahma, Viṣṇu, Rudra, Ananda and Sadāśiva under the mandate of Lord Śiva who actually actuates the *Mahāsaṁhāra* (the Great Cosmic involution) through the agency of Sadāśiva. So, the operative agents stand to Lord Śiva what the ministers to the emperor. There may be many directed agents to carry out the various activities; but, Lord Śiva is held to be the directing overall agent. K.Sivaraman (1973: 47-50) in his dissertation explains this concept of Supreme God thus:

"The entire universe with its creators, conservers and destroyers is under Śiva's control even as dried leaves whirl under the control of a stormy wind. . . The Destroyer is the only transcendent Being (*tattvātīta*), transcending all *tattvas*..... The designation of the Supreme Reality as Destroyer is metaphysical as it is also mystical. The Concept of Destroyer represents God as the Universal Being. Everything is 'nought' (*śūnya*) before Being. God is not something or someone which exists along with the totality of beings. He is Being itself. . . The Destroyer stands for eternity which truly transcends temporality. . . Only the Destroyer is the Death of Death (*kālakāla*), the realm beyond the realm destroyed, and is the ultimate foundation of ontological course

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in the face of anxiety of transitoriness".

During the period of *Mahāpraḷaya*, the whole universe with all its contents including the aforesaid minor gods are dissolved in Him. Hara (another name for Śiva) is the Universal Destroyer who is the ground of the dissolved universe. The phenomenal world is resolved in its material cause, *Māyā*, which takes its ground under the feet of the Lord. The relationship between the material cause (*māyā* and the efficient cause (the Lord) is described as *abhinnābhāva*, i.e., inseparable union like that of Vyāpaka and Vyāpya (the Pervader and the Pervaded) and that of *ādhāra* and *ādheya* (the Supporter and the Supported).

God as the Material Cause

The material cause *māyā*, its product the world, and the ground of *māyā*, viz., Lord's Śakti, are compared to the seed, its shoot and earth (*Civaṅāṉapōtam* 15-16). If the seed comes into contact with the moist earth, it becomes capable of manifesting a shoot. So also, if *māyā* reposing at the feet of the Lord receives the Divine Will of His Śakti, it becomes capable of manifesting the world. If there is no moisture in the earth, the seed could not shoot. Likewise, if there is no will of Lord's Śakti, then *māyā* could not evolve. The world is evolved from *māyā* with the will of Lord's Śakti which functions in accordance with the individual's *mala* to endow the concerned souls with the different types of psycho-physical organisms.

But some passages in the *Tirumuṟais* and *Āgamas* reveal that the world is emanated from God Himself (*Tiruvācakam* 3:44; *Civaṅāṉapōtam* p.16). These portions are taken in a literal sense by some people who argue that God forms not only the efficient cause but also the material cause.[12] Such misunderstanding would go against the same literature which describes Him to be immutable. Though the Lord transcends all the elements that constitute the universe, He is simultaneously immanent in them. His immanence should not be mistaken for material causality. Civaṅāṉamuṉivar, (*Civaṅāṉapōtam* p.16; *Civaṅāṉacittiyār* 1:2:48) the able exponent of *Śaiva Siddhānta*, submits an illustration to explain the figurative expressions in the texts. The lotus actually germinates from its root and not from the mud though it gets the name *paṅkayam* which really means that which is born of mud. Similarly, the world is evolved directly from its root *māyā* and not from God. Nevertheless, it is figuratively said that the world is proceeded from God who actually provides the ground for *māyā*. So, the material universe (i.e., non-intelligent principle) could not originate from the Intelligent Principle, viz., God.

If God is held to be the material cause, the product (i.e., world) also should resemble Him in content and quality. Since there are many imperfections and defects in the world, they are also to be accounted for from the material cause. Since God is conceived to be absolutely perfect, impeccable and immutable by nature, He could not be postulated to be the material cause which is subject to changes. The defects and diverse features are due to *āṇava* and *mūla-karma* of the souls.

However, K.Sivaraman (1973: 112-15) attempts to explain the

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material causality in order to reconcile the two views in the following passage of his dissertation.

"The intelligent agent of the world is not as such the material cause of the world but only as related to the non-intelligent *maya*. . . . . It is efficient cause which is also material cause by virtue of its being inseparably qualified by *māyā*..... Just as the the hair and the nails, etc., are not born of the body alone (insentient) or the soul alone (sentient), so the universe is born not of *māyā* alone or Maheśvara alone, but of the Embodied Unity which is accordingly described as the 'womb of all elements' and also as the Supreme Lord, the Mighty etc. . ." His interpretation obviously confirms the sole causality of God.

Third Adhikaraṇa (Part III)

This *adhikaraṇa* is devoted to clarify whether the efficient cause of the universe is one or many. *Śaiva Siddhānta* advocates monotheism, and so it does not subscribe to the view of polytheism. The syllogism is as follows:

Proposition: The Universal Destroyer is the Primal Mover of the universe.

The second *adhikaraṇa* concludes that the primary God to the universe is the Universal Destroyer. This *adhikaraṇa* examines the view of the polytheists. They argue that the production of a chariot involves many carpenters and the creation of a more wonderful and stupendous universe naturally should require more than one God. But their concept is refuted by the *Saiva Siddhāntin* maintining His propostion:

Reason: Because the souls that cognize things through determinate perception have no independence without the Universal Destroyer, who transcends such a kind of perception.

Śaiva Siddhānta subsumes all the minor gods and the spiritually elevated souls under the category of *pasu*. There are also the defective souls. They are all dependent on Lord Śiva who alone is independent, omniscient, omnipotent and omnipresent. Though there are many carpenters in fashioning a chariot, all of them are directed by one Master Carpenter. So also, the deities are not autonomous and they discharge the assigned duties under the overall supervision and direction of the Supreme God Śiva. The released souls which obtained godliness *(sivatvam)* would not account for the cosmic functions, for they are held to be in constant enjoyment of eternal bliss of the Lord which is the *summum bonum* of their spiritual sojourn.

Another Version of Cosmological Argument

There are many types of cosmological arguments propounded by the western thinkers to prove the existence of God. One of them is the argument from motion. It is as old as Plato and Aristotle and it is fashioned by St.Thomas Aquinas (Hick 1973:71-3). According to this argument, the things in the universe are movable and they require a mover. There are two kinds of movers, viz., the primary and secondary. If there is no primary mover, then there are no subsequent movers. For instance, the book is moved by hand which in turn is moved by the consciousness of one's self. To avoid

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infinite regress, it is postulated that there should be a First Mover who causes everything to move, but Himself is not moved by anything. Movement of an object indicates passing from one place or condition to another. It is always associated with variation, mutation, limit and contingency. The ultimate force or Prime Mover should be free from mutation, limitation and temporality, and that is the eternal reality.

According to Plato, the power that generates motion should be logically anterior to the power that gets it and passes it on. This primal force is the uncaused cause. His disciple, Aristotle envisaged that change implied an unchanging absolute source of motion which could be designated as God.

This sort of cosmological argument is not unknown to *Śaiva Siddhānta* (*Ñāṉāmrutam* 58:4-7). The commentator (before A.D.1700) of *Ñāṉāmirutam* presents from the contents of the text the following five-membered syllogism:

Proposition: The universe should have a creator.
Reason: Since it is inert, its evolution and resolution would become impossible without an intelligent being.
Example: Like: the vehicles such as a chariot etc.
Application: The vehicles could not move by themselves. They require a driver to move them.
Conclusion: So also, the universe requires a mover who actuates it in accordance with the Moral Law.

Thus, the existence of the Primal Mover is established.

However, the author from the standpoint of a novice produces two examples to propose that even inanimate objects possess the force of motion. They are:

1. Cow's milk is inert. But it nurtures the calf to grow.
2. The insentient magnet attracts the inanimate filament of iron.

Nevertheless, the author exposes the folly of the examples pointing out that the milk is possible only from a sentient cow, and an intelligent agent is essential to bring the magnet and iron in close quarters, thus making the original proposition tenable and reasonable.[13]

In this context, it is appropriate to quote Tirikūṭarācappakkavirāyar (A.D.1700), a great *Śaiva* poet, who beautifully portrays that the Lord set all the worlds in motion and they revolve like toys without thread (by the mere will of God) (*Tirukkuṟṟālakkuṟavañci* p.119). The concept of God as the Prime Mover is further attested to in one of the poems of Tāyumāṇavar (18th century A.D.), who declares that even an atom could not move without Him.[14] There is a reference to this idea in *Kenopaniṣad* also.[15]

Moral Argument

The supplementary argument adduced in favour of the theistic hypothesis is known as the *moral* argument. The cosmological argument attempts to prove the efficient cause of the universe. The purpose of the moral argument is to point out that the Lord is also the Moral Governor of the universe who effects orderliness in the life of individuals on the basis of their actions. This

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argument stands on the doctrine of *karma*. Saint Cēkkiḻār (*Tiruttoṇḍar Purāṇam* 34:5) enumerates four cardinal tenets of Śaivism viz., 1. the soul performing the *karma*; 2. the performed deeds; 3. their effects and 4. the Lord who allots the fruits of the deeds to the respective souls. These four aspects are further attested to by Umāpati-civam (*Tiruvaruṭpayaṉ* 53) and they are very important to apprehend the moral argument. In order to exhaust the potency of *āṇava*, the soul is invested with a body, a habitat and objects of experience. In the embodied condition, the soul is capable of engaging in multifarious activities which may be good or bad, but they are forgotten or neglected. According to *Śaiva Siddhānta*, everyone is conditioned and governed by the doctrine of *karma*. Nobody can escape the consequences of one's own deeds. The law of *karma* is relentless and inexorable. 'As we sow so we reap' is the Tamil proverb. Though the doer ignores or forgets his actions, they are taken into account by the Unseen Absolute Observer who distributes the deserts to the individual. The present life of a person is the outcome of his deeds in the past birth and also it prepares for the future. The Lord leaves free will to the individual either to make or mar his future. In this sense, the man is held to be the architect of his own self.

The Jains uphold that the *Karma* itself can yield fruits and there is no need for God. They give a fine simile to explain their view. In the herd of cows, a particular calf, if released, would search and reach its own mother to suckle the milk. So also the fruit of *karma* by itself would identify and join its doer in the midst of many (*Nālaṭiyār* 101). But the folly of this analogy is noted by the *Śaiva Siddhāntin*. The *karma* is insentient, while the calf is sentient. So, a sentient being is not a comparison to an insentient object and hence, the analogy is fallacious. Civaṅñāṇacittiyār also refers to a similar comparison. One may say that *karma* can fructify all by itself just like an arrow travelling by itself. But it has been pointed out that this analogy is equally short-sighted, since without an archer the travel of an arrow is impossible. The Tamil proverb says that there is no point in blaming the arrow when there is an archer who shot it. So, *Śaiva Siddhānta* concludes that the *karma* becomes inert and insentient and hence it cannot remember or identify its doer to join him. Then, it follows that there should be an omniscient Being to administer the fruits of *karma* to the concerned doer. The Absolute Being is held to be the Legislator and Executor of moral law.[16] He is also the Divine Justice who is impartial in dispensing the law. The God as moral governor is compared to the king, physician and parents. If the subjects go astray, they are penalised by the king. If they do some signal service, they are rewarded. The Lord is the Ruler of the Universe. If there is any upset in the natural course of the Universe, He sets it right. The *purāṇic* stories of punishing the atrocious demons and *rākṣasas* are ample evidence for the Lord's moral administration. He punishes the wicked in order to make them realise the folly of their conduct and to instruct the need for undertaking a virtuous way of life. All such actions are reformatory in character. He showers grace on the virtuous people offering all benevolence. The chastening

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by the Lord is for the betterment of the souls. *Śaiva Siddhānta* classifies Lord's grace into two, viz., (1) virtuous grace *(aṟakkaruṇai)* -- this is meant for the virtuous souls, and (2) heroic grace *(maṟakkaruṇai)* -- this is directed towards the vicious souls.

God is also compared to the physician. "The physician doctors the body, whereas God doctors the soul". The concept of God as a healer or physician is also found in Buddhism and Christianity. The physician administers at times bitter medicines to the patient and also prescribes sugercoated pills in order to relieve him from physical ailments. Similarly, the pains and pleasures being the consequence of one's own deeds are carefully given as medicine by God as a remedy to the malady of transmigration which is considered a great disease. Saint Tirunāvukkaracar *(Tēvāram 6:54:8)* extols the Lord as the Great Physician who alone could cure the incurable disease of birth.

God is also compared to the parents. He is the parent patronizing all kinds of beings in all ages at all places. If the children are mischievous, it is the duty of the parents to correct them. *Civaňāṇa Cittiyār* (2:2:12-16, 30-5) says, "Parents thrash their children for disobedience and handcuff them --- punishing them, not because they hate their children but because they love them though it may not appear to be so". They actually derive great pleasure on hearing the rare achievements of their children. Like the parents, God treats the souls through punishments and reward, with the sole purpose of liberating them from the clutches of mundane life.

God is also compared to the washerman (Kandaswamy 1976:331-32). The washerman smashes the cloth against the washing stone not to tear it, but to cleanse it. The pain inflicted by God is merely the bleaching powder to wash away the impurity of the soul.

The concept of God as a moral governor is very old in the Tamil tradition. *Tolkāppiyam* (col.57) designates the Lord as 'Fate deciding God' *(pālvarai teyvam)*. The same idea is preserved in *Tirucciṟṟampalakkōvaiyār* (8) of Māṇikkavācakar. The ancient Tamil ethics, *Tirukkuṟal* denotes God as *vakuttāṉ* meaning Apportioner. "Those who have accumulated wealth could enjoy nothing but what the Divine Disposer has apportioned to them", *(Tirukkuṟal* 377) declares Tiruvaḷḷuvar. From this couplet, it is crystal clear that Tiruvaḷḷuvar represents the Tamil tradition which preserves firm belief in the Divine dispensation.

Thus it is evident that *Śaiva Siddhānta* postulates the fact of absolute God in order to account for the fact of ethical order.

After realising the *existence* of God, let us now proceed to know about His nature, functions and forms, His relation with the souls and the ways of realising Him as evidenced from the *Śaiva* lore.

Nature of God

Śaiva Siddhānta identifies twofold nature of God known as *Svarūpalakṣaṇa(Ciṟappu iyalpu)* and *Tatasthalakṣaṇa (Potu iyalpu)*. *Svarūpalakṣaṇa* denotes his essential and intrinsic nature, while *Tatasthalakṣaṇa* refers to His general or accidental nature that

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arises due to His relation to the souls. God in His essential nature is static, immutable and immeasurable by the limits of time and space. He transcends all the sources of empirical knowledge. He has no name and form. Māṇikkavācakar refers to (*Tiruvācakam* 11:1,7:10) this nature of God in his *Tiruvācakam* as *orunāmam ōruruvam oṉṟumilāṉ, ētu avaṉ ūr? ētu avaṉ pēr?* etc., God is the Pure Being (*Sat*), the very source of all knowledge (*Cit*) and eternal bliss (*Ānanda*). The *Saiva Āgamas* mention eight divine qualities to be His essential characteristics, as identified by Parimēlaḷakar, a staunch *Vaiṣṇavite* in his learned commentary on *Tirukkuṟal*. They are the following:

Tamil	Sanskrit	English equivalent
1. *Taṉvayattaṉ ātal*	*Svatantra*	Self-dependence
2. *Tūya uṭampiṉaṉ ātal*	*Viśuddha deha*	Immaculate Body
3. *Iyaṟkai uṇarviṉaṉ ātal*	*Anādhi bodham*	Natural understanding
4. *Muṟṟum uṇartal*	*Sarvajñata*	Omniscience
5. *Iyalpākavē pācaṅkaḷin niṅkutal*	*Nirāmayam*	Eternally free from bonds
6. *Peraruḷuṭaimai*	*Nityalūptaśaktitva*	infinite grace
7. *Muṭivil āṟṟal uṭaimai*	*Anantaśaktita*	infinite potency
8. *Varampil iṉpam uṭaimai*	*Nityatriptaka*	infinite bliss

Since the Lord is associated inherently with these eight divine attributes, He is known as *eṇkuṇattāṉ*; this term occurs in the nineth couplet of the first chapter in *Tirukkuṟal* (i.e., *Kaṭavuḷ Vāḻttu* 'the Praise of God') and hence one commentator ably attempted to isolate the eight qualities under reference in the first eight couplets of the same chapter.[17] Some considered that the third and the fourth qualities may be counted as one as well as the second and fifth as one. Thus the Lord is said to possess six divine characteristics and hence He is known as *Pakavaṉ* which name occurs in *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad*, *Tirukkural* and Tevaram to denote Lord Siva (*Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* 3:11, *Tēvāram* 1:121:1). However, Māṇikkavācakar reminds one that the Lord's auspicious qualities are innumerable (*Tiruvācakam* 2:3).

God in His essential nature is called *Paraśivam* or *Svarūpaśivam*, and His inseparable energy is known as *Parāśakti*.

Out of His boundless compassion towards the souls, He becomes dynamic through His will of Divine energy, assuming various forms and names for the benefit of the souls. "The Real appears in diverse ways. But the appearances are of the Real. The appearances, while not exhaustive of the Real, are adequate for the purpose for which they are manifested and are wholly satisfying to the persons concerned. . . While the Infinite in its Grace is pleased to make itself available to the souls, it cannot be possessed in its fullness

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by the souls" (Devasenapathi 1963:16-17). These forms are not material, but they are out of His Grace, which is otherwise known as *Śakti*. In this state, god becomes *Śivam* and *Śakti* to commence the cosmic functions. *Tatastha* forms of God become the object of worship. So, it is held that *Tatastha* form is not illusory and it is as real as *Svarūpa* form.

Svarūpa and *Tatastha* concept of God should not be equated respectively with the concept of *Nirguna Brahman* and *Saguṇa Brahman*, of *Vedānta* philosophy. *Nirguṇa Brahman* is devoid of any quality or attribute and it is a mere abstraction. But *Svarūpaśiva* has countless divine qualities. *Saguṇa Brahman* of *Vedānta* has material qualities and it is only fictitious like a snake in rope, water in mirage etc. But, *Tatasthaśiva* is a reality of the Absolute. However, in the Saiva Tamil devotional literature, God is depicted as one who has no quality or symbol which means that He is devoid of material qualities and forms (*Tiruvācakam* 6:46, 18:1, 24:4, 4:4, 41:6). It is worth mentioning that Tirumular praises the Lord as one who is bereft of the triple material *guṇas*, viz., *sattva*, *rājas* and *tamas* (*Mukkuṇa nirkkuṇaṇ*) (*Tirumantirum* 8:9:1).

Transcendence and Immanence

The spiritual experiences of the Tamil *Śaiva* saints as recorded in the devotional literature reveal the Lord's transcendental as well as immanent features. Let us briefly present some of the features.

God transcends description. He is beyond the word and its content (*Tiruvācakam* 3:40,111; 27:4). He transcends the five-fold sense-perception (*ibid.*, 3:113, 5:76). He is beyond the ken of thought (*ibid.*, 1:24, 3:41, 4:204, 7:7, 10:16). He is impenetrable even by the Scriptures (*ibid.*, 3:49, 5:95, 11:4). He is inconceivable not only to the deities but also to the Hindu Trinities(*ibid.*, 4:1-9, 5:30,43; 8:2 11:14, 41:1). He surpasses the limits of beginning, middle and end of things (*ibid.*, 1:41, 73). He transcends all the elements (*Tattvātīta*). He has no origin and so no decay (*ibid.*, 4:133,5:70,7:1). He is eternal and immutable (*ibid.*, 5:91,22:5). He is free from bondage and liberation (*Civañāṇacittiyar* 1:44). Before His greatness, even the universe is but an atom. Before His subtle state, even an atom would become the magnificent universe (*Tiruvācakam* 3:5-12, *Ñāṇāmrutam* 55:21-3). His greatness cannot be exhausted. He is omniscient (*Tiruvācakam* 1:38,40;4:107,5:50,25:10). Though God transcends everything, He pervades all objects. He is immanent in all animate and inanimate beings. He is their indweller and inner ruler. This feature of God is known as *antaryāmitva* which occupies a supreme place also in the *Vaiṣṇava* theology (Radhakrishnan 1960:53-4).

The Lord abides everywhere without leaving any space (*Tiruvācakam 3:116-17*). He (*ibid.*, 15:5) is immanent in the five gross elements (viz., earth, water, fire, air and ether) and in the sun, moon and the souls (collectively known as *Aṣṭamūrta*). He is seated in the consciousness and also in the organs of knowledge (*ibid.*, 33:5, 34:4). He is the soul of all souls (*ibid.*, 1:69, 2:2, 22:4).

His immanence with the souls and matter is compared to the inseparable relationship of body and soul, word and its meaning, fragrance

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and flower, relish and the fruit, oil and sesamum, etc (*Tēvāram* 3:105: 1, *Tiruvācakam* 1:44, 3:116-17). He is the fire concealed in the wood; He is likewise the ghee in the milk and the brilliance in the great gem. If one churns in his consciousness with the stick of intense devotion entwined by the rope of knowledge, the immanent God becomes apparent to the devotee (*Tēvāram* 5:90:10)

The description of the immanent nature of Siva by the Tamil devotional poets, seems to be similar to that of the Upanisadic seers. A significant parallel is given below from the *Svetasvatara Upaniṣad* (1:15, 16).

"As oil in sesamum seeds, as butter in cream, as water in the dry bed of a stream, as fire in friction sticks, so is the Self (God) seized in one's own soul if one looks for Him with truthfulness and austerity". "The self which pervades all things as butter is contained in milk, which is the root of self-knowledge and austerity, that is the Brahman, the highest mystic doctrine. That is the highest mystic doctrine".

Śiva and Śakti

The static state of the Absolute is Śiva and its dynamic state is Śakti. Śiva and Śakti are like the sun and its rays. They are similar to the substance and its quality (*guṇa guṇibhava*, i.e., *Samavāya sambandha*). The two are inseparably connected like a tree and its hard core (*Civañāṇacittiyār* 1:3:67). Like fire which is red in colour and hot in quality, the One God becomes Śiva and Śakti. There is no substance without quality and no quality without substance. So also, there is no Śiva without Śakti and no Śakti without Śiva. This sort of relationship is also known as *Tatatmya* (i.e. the relationship of two things which are really two aspects of one thing).

The Lord's grace is personified as His consort Śakti (*ibid.*, 5:2:9). Śakti is the embodiment of Pure intelligence (*ibid.*, 1:3:62). Śiva's Śakti is One only, known as *Parāśakti* (the Supreme Energy). But due to the variation in the cosmic activities, it becomes many. Volitional Energy (*Icchā Śakti*) is the supreme love of the Lord concerned with the removal of the impurities (*malas*) of the souls. Through Cognitive Energy (*Ñāṇa Śakti*) the Lord knows the needs of the souls and through Conative Energy (*kriyāśakti*) He creates the universe to distribute their deserts (*ibid* 1:3:63).

The Cosmic Functions

The Lord discharges the cosmic functions through His Śakti without any exertion or effort, by His mere Will. That is why they are described in the devotional literature as His *sports* (*ibid.*, 1:2:36, *Tiruvācakam* 7:11, 12). Here, sport does not mean a pastime or an amusement. Surely, He would not derive any pleasure at the expense of the souls by subjecting them to untold miseries under cosmic functions. So, it is clear that the word *sport* indicates that He performs all the activities with effortless ease. The purpose of these functions is to bestow on the souls all the earthly and celestial happiness and finally, when the ripe time dawns, granting them the eternal bliss from which there is no return to the temporal abode of empirical life. The five cosmic functions are as follows (*Tirumantiram* 2:9:1-10, *Civañāṇacittiyār* 1:2:37):

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	Tamil	Sanskrit	English Equivalent
1.	*Paṭaippu*	*Śṛṣṭi*	Creation
2.	*Kāppu*	*Sthiti*	Protection
3.	*Aḻippu*	*Samhāra*	Destruction
4.	*Maṟaippu*	*Tirobhāva*	obscuration or concealment
5.	*Aruḷal*	*Anugraha*	Bestowal of Grace

Let us briefly consider them one by one:

1. Creation

God creates the universe from the material cause, *Māyā* through His *Cit-Śakti* for the betterment of the souls, providing them with psycho-physical organisms, and the world for habitation. Creation is intended to enable the souls to engage in activities and to get various kinds of experiences so that the potency of the root evil, *āṇava*, would be exhausted.

2. Protection

Protection or maintenance is exercised by the Lord through His Sakti with the sole purpose of making the souls experience the yields of their *karma* accrued in various births. The Lord protects the souls in such a way that they do not miss the experience due to them, whether it is pleasurable or painful depending upon the nature of their *karma*. He protects the souls according to the Moral Law.

3. Destruction

According to the law of *karma* the souls embark in transmigration vested with various kinds of bodies in various births. In experiencing the Fruits of *karma*, their energies get tired and their physical frames become like the worn-out clothes. In order to give them rest, destruction takes place. It is often compared with sleep that recoups one's energies for the task of the following birth. God destroys only the contact of soul with matter.

4. Obscuration

The souls are eternally in conjunction with *āṇava*, the spiritual darkness which has the potency to veil the soul from having a clear knowledge of the three realities, viz., *pati*, *pasu* and *pāsa*. Only by making the obscuring power of *āṇava* to fully function, its evil could be extirpated. So, *Tirodhana Śakti* of the Lord works through *āṇava* to enchant the soul to earthly pursuits and sensual enjoyment till its power is completely emptied. At this stage, the soul develops a sense of indifference towards the yields of *karma* and also a sense of equanimity in adversity and prosperity resulting in *karma-sāmya (iruviṉai oppu)*. So, the purpose of obscuration is meant for the maturation of *aṇava mala*. As soon as the power of *āṇava* is destroyed, the soul is opened to have the vision of God.

5. Bestowal of Grace

Observing the ripening of *āṇava*

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and the spiritual progress of the souls, the Lord appears in the form of *Guru* 'Preceptor', purifies them through performance of some rites known as *dīkṣā* and imparts Divine Wisdom *(Pati'ñāna)* which illumines the souls to realise their oneness with the Lord. Through *Anugraha Śakti*, God bestows grace on the souls.

The first three functions are with particular reference to the physical aspect of the souls, i.e., God creates only the physical body, protects it and destroys it. But the last two actions are directly concerned with the souls. He conceals the souls from Him in order to make them mature by exterminating their impurity (i.e., *āṇava*). On the perfected souls He showers grace which is really the grant of eternal freedom. The first four actions culminate in the final one. *Anugraha* is the aim and end of all souls. All His five actions are actually the acts of His *Śakti* which is otherwise known as Grace. These five cosmic functions of God are symbolically and artistically reflected in the beautiful image of Lord Naṭarāja (Coomaraswamy 1971:66-79). Sometimes, protection and bestowal of grace are considered to be one action, while concealment and destruction are one. Thus, the Lord's functions are also known as three *(muttoḻil)*. All His functions are actually the acts of grace.

The Ground of His Activities

Next, the question arises with regard to the place where God could station Himself to commence His cosmic functions. The potter places himself on earth before starting the production of a pot. Likewise, is there any ground for the Lord to inaugurate His functions? If it were essential to station Himself insome place, then that space exists before His creation work. If He would not create, there could be no place. To this circular argument, the *Āgamas* present a clear explanation through the analogy of the Time principle (*Ñāṇāmrutam* 62:4-7, *Civaňāṇacittiyār* 1:2:37). It is the lapse of time that causes the production, maintenance and destruction of the seven worlds. But time does not require to station itself somewhere for bringing about the aforesaid changes. Like the time principle, the Lord requires no stand to place Himself, for He performs the functions through His Will, otherwise known as *Śakti*. This analogy is only partial, for *Saiva Siddhānta* considers that time is a product of impure matter *(Asuddha māyā)*, and so it is inert. It could not function automatically. It is employed as an auxiliary cause for the Lord's cosmic functions.

Does God undergo any changes?

The next doubt arises whether the Lord is affected by His cosmic activities. The *Āgamas* dispel this doubt again through analogy. In the presence of sun-shine, the lotus is blooming (creation), the sun-glass emits fire (protection) and the pool water evaporates (destruction). Though the sun is held responsible for these changes, they do not effect any change in the sun. The Lord is like the sun. He is not disturbed by His functions that take place in His mere presence *(Civaňāṇacittiyār* 1:2:33). The sun analogy gets a fresh interpretation in *Ñāṇām rutam* (63:1-4) which states that though the sun causes some lotus-buds to bloom, the other flowers like lily to fade and the old ones to wither, these

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changes do not hit the sun. So also, God is untouched by any change due to His cosmic functions. He does not suffer any weariness due to His activities. If He were only immanent in the things, surely He would be affected. But, He is simultaneously transcendent and hence no change is possible. Only those who act with physical body would be affected. Since God acts through His *Śakti*, He is least affected. He is eternally immutable *(avikāri)*. Also it is to be noted that through His Will, the five modifications known as *Śiva tattvas* are emanated from the *Suddha māyā* (pure matter) and they form the ground for the Lord's cosmic activities which are actually assigned to His inseparable *sakti*.

Two more analogies are given in *Civaññāṉa Cittiyār* (1:2:31). Though the different states of wakefulness, dreaming, dreamless sleep etc., arise and merge in the soul, they do not affect the soul. Though the words and their sense as understood in the books subside in and re-emerge from the soul's consciousness, they do not affect the soul. So also, though the worlds are evolved and resolved in Him, He is not affected by them. He stands with the world being united and at the same time not united. One more analogy is worth mentioning. The three realities viz., *pati*, *pasu* and *pāsa* are respectively compared to ether, sea and salt. God is like the ether that provides space for the waters of the sea which are compared to the souls. The triple bonds *(pāsa)* that go with the souls and not with God are like the salt that clings to the water and not the space occupied by the sea. Thus, God remains unaffected though He is inseparable from the souls and matter *(Civananapotam* 7:3:44, *Civaññāṉacittiyar* 7:3).

In *Civaneripirakācam* some more illustrations are found. Though the air that does not leave the ether mingles with the fragrance, heat and cold and moves in the ether, it does not affect the ether. The snake is not afflicted by the poison, though it possesses it. Though asafoetida kills any tree that comes into its contact, it will not kill the tree on which it grows (Devasenapathi 1963:23-4). These comparisons are sufficient to maintain that God is not at all affected by the triple bonds and He is eternally independent.

Next, let us proceed to deal with the relationship of God with the souls as found in the *Saiva Siddhānta*.

God's relationship with the souls

Tēvāram (1:11:2) and *Meykaṇṭaśāstras* denote three kinds of relationship of the Lord with the souls *(Civaññāṉapotam* 2:1, *Civaññānacittiyār* 2:1, *Tirukkaḷiṟṟuppatiyār* 86). Accordingly, He is one with them *(oṉrāy)*, different from them *(vērāy)* and along with them *(uṭaṉāy)*. These are illustrated through some analogies.

1. The soul and the body

The Lord becomes one with the souls in actuating them to undergo the five-fold functions. To illustrate this sort of relationship the usual simile is that of the soul and body. Like the soul that animates the body, the Lord animates the soul. Though the soul and the body are one due to their combination, they are different in substance. So also the Lord and the soul are one due

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to their intimacy, but they are different categories. This sort of oneness is known as *Advaita* or *Ananya* (non-difference). The intimate and inseparable contact of two things which makes them appear to be one is recognised as *Advaita* (or *abhēda*) in *Saiva Siddhānta*. *Advaita* does not mean that God and soul are one as held in *Vedanta* philosophy of *Saṁkara*.

2. The sunlight and the eye-sight

Though the soul and the Lord are inseparably connected, they are not of the same content. Their difference is just like the sunlight and the eye-sight. The eye cannot perceive things in its own right. It requires the help of an external power, viz., the sunlight. The souls are like the eyes, while the Lord is like the sun. This analogy proclaims the concept of *bheda*.

3. The finite-consciousness and the eye-sight

The third comparison to explain the Lord's relationship with the souls is that of the finite consciousness and the eye-sight. In the former illustration, the eye-sight requires external light for its perception. Here, it is in need of inner-light known as *ātman's cit-śakti* (i.e.the soul's finite consciousness). It is purely internal and pervades the eye-sight in illuminating the objects. Like the soul's consciousness to the eye, the Lord's consciousness-force stands to the soul. He is the life of the souls. Here, in this relation, He is one with the soul and at the same time different from it. Hence, this relationship is known as *bhēdābhēda*.

Thus, *Saiva Siddhānta* propounds three kinds of relationship of God with soul, viz., 1.*abhēda* like body and soul, 2.*bhēda* like the sunlight and eye-sight, and 3. *bhēdābhēda* like the finite-consciousness and eye-sight. But other theistic schools prefer only one among the three and adduce different illustrations to maintain their view-points. The *Kevalādvaita* of *Śaṁkara* interprets the word *advaita* to mean one reality, and that is why it is known as monism. This school treats God and soul as the different modes of the same stuff like the gold and its ornament. The *Dvaita* of *Madhva* advocates dualism considering that the word *'advaita'* means more than one reality. According to this school, God and soul are completely different categories like light and darkness. The *Pāñcarātras*, a sect of *Vaiṣṇavism* propounds the concept of *bhēdābhēda* taking the two like word and its sense. All these ideas are presented here according to the commentary of *Civaṅāṉapōtam*. It seems that *Śaiva Siddhānta* did not agree with these views. Its concept of *advaita* is known as *Suddhādvaita*, i.e. pure *advaita* as explained through the three analogies cited earlier.

The relationship of God and soul is further explained in *Saiva Siddhānta* through a fresh analogy derived from the alphabetical system.[18] 'A' is the first vowel sound in the alphabetical series. It is an independent sound, pronounced by the mere opening of mouth. Since all sounds -- let them be vowels (*uyir*, also means soul) or consonants (*mey* also means body) -- are to be pronounced only after mouth-opening, the influence of 'A' is naturally mingled in them. Its influence is implicitly found in the vowel series, whereas

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the consonants require the help of 'A' for their pronunciation. This is the position in the Indian languages. The *Saiva Siddhānta* develops an analogy from this source to elucidate the relationship of God with the souls and matter. God is like 'A'. He is the Primary Being. Souls are like the vowels, and the matter like the consonants. He prevades not only the souls *(uyir)* but also the matter *(mey)*. If there is no 'A' there are no vowels and consonants. Likewise, if there is no God, there are no souls and matter. This *Siddhāntic* concept has its root in the very first couplet of *Tirukkuṟal* which illumines that like the alphabets having 'A' as their primary sound, so also the world has the Lord, *Ātipakavaṉ*, to be its Prime Head.

The Forms of God

The *svarūpa* state of the Lord denotes that He is the Absolute of philosophy, while His *Tatastha* state indicates that He is the God of theism. It is natural to anticipate that the Lord who actuates the cosmic functions should possess some form. Some would think that if He had a form, He should be treated one among the people. Others would argue that if He had no form, the cosmic functions could not be carried out. In reply, *Śaiva Siddhānta* expatiates that the Lord can function even without form just like the soul that has no form, but animates the body. The Lord manifests Himself in some form not because He cannot function without form, but because the souls would be benefited by His form. The Lord condescending from His Absolute nature comes to the reach of the souls. This simplicity of the Highest Being is known as *eḷivaruṭal* in *Tiruvācakam* and *Śaulabhya* in *Viśiṣṭādvaita*. "The devotee feels that God is closer to us than breathing, and nearer than hands and feet".

He reveals Himself in various manifestations to His devotees under different situations. He even takes the form of a mother-pig at His own Will to feed her young-ones when they lose their mother. Nevertheless, the concept of incarnation *(avatāra)*, one of the central tenets in *Viśiṣṭādvaita* is not admissible in *Saiva Siddhānta*. An erudite scholar in the system of *Viśiṣṭādvaita* observes:

"The vast *purāṇic* literature is said to be singularly free from any account of Siva's birth in flesh and blood. It is contended that the author of evolution cannot Himself be subject to that process" *(Ramanujachari* 1948:13).

It is said that the Lord appears and disappears at His own Will. His forms are radically different from those of the mortals whose forms are the products of matter *(māyā)*. Since the souls are fettered by *anava* type of *pasa*, they get their bodies from the *maya* type of *pāśa*. Since the Lord by nature is free from the three types of *pāśa* (viz., *āṇava*, *karma* and *māyā*), His form has no connection with *māyā*, His own *śakti* manifests His form. All His forms are the forms of *Śakti*, which is grace, intelligence and brilliance all at once. Tirumūlar declares that love is God (*Tirumantiram* 1:18:1).

All the objects have one of the three forms, viz., corporeal form *(rūpā)*, incorporeal form *(arūpa)* and corporeal-cum-incorporeal form *(rūpārūpa)*. *Arūpa* is not subject to sense-perception like the ether.

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It could be knowable through inference. *Rūpa* form is perceptible like earth. *Rūpārūpa* form is sometimes perceived and at other times inferred like the air and vapour. Likewise, the Lord's forms are also held to be threefold (*Civaṅāṉacittiyār* 1:2:38,55). There are nine variations in the manifestation of Siva, due to the variation in the substrates where he stays for performing the cosmic functions. They are collectively known as *'navam taru pētam'* in *Civaṅāṉacittiyār*. They are classified into three groups: *Śiva*, *Śakti*, *Nāda* and *Bindu* constitute the *arūpa* forms. Sadāśiva is the *rūpārūpa* form and it is represented in the form of Śivaliṅga. Maheśvara, Rudra, Viṣṇu and Brahma are the fully manifested forms (*rūpa*). From Śiva, *Śakti* arises; from *Śakti*, *Nāda* arises; from *Nāda*, *Bindu* arises and so on. Among these nine, *Śakti* and *Bindu* are the variations of *Śakti tattva*. Corresponding to the variations in the form of Śiva, the manifestations of *Śakti* also vary. Thus, Śiva and Śakti, Nāda and Bindu, Sadāśiva and Manonmaṇi, Maheśvara and Maheśvari, Rudra and Umā, Vishṇu and Mahālakṣmī and Brahma and Sarasvatī form the Divine couples to initiate the cosmic activities.

It is to be borne in mind that Rudra, Viṣṇu and Brahma under reference belong to *Sampupakṣa* (i.e. the variations of Śiva) while the *Trimūrtis* belong to *Aṇupakṣa* (i.e. the group of spiritually evolved souls). This sort of classification is also found in the *Tirumuṟais*.

Threefold Mūrtas

All the corporeal forms that the Lord has assumed for the deliverance of the souls are classified into three kinds, viz., *Bhoda*, *Vega* and *Yoga* (*ibid.*, 1:2:50). *Bhoga* means enjoyment. In this manifestation, the Lord with His consort, *Śakti*, is known as the Divine Father and Mother (*Ammai Appar*). *Umāmaheśvara mūrta* belongs to this kind. This form is symbolic of enjoyment, conferring on the souls the earthly pleasures. The Lord Himself sets an example to all species of living beings to live in conjugal life. Saint Tirunāvakkaracar had the vision of God in the pairs of birds and animals when he was exposed to the sacred shrine at Tiruvaiyāṟu (*Tēvāram* 4:21:31). The significance of this *mūrta* is also pointed out by Tiruñāṉacampantar and Māṇikkavācakar (*ibid* 3:24:1, *Tiruvācakam* 12:9). *Vega* means anger. *Vega Mūrta* is symbolic of His righteous anger to correct the vicious and wicked people. Among his many heroic deeds, eight are important. They are portrayed in *Tirumantiram* (2:2:1-8). They include the burning of the triple flying fortress of the *Asuras*, the kicking to death of Yama, the killing of Jalandhara, the subjugation of Rāvaṇa, etc. *Yoga* means meditation. The Lord takes *yoga murta* also He becomes an ascetic of a very high order. He also becomes an ideal preceptor to instruct the matured souls to attain salvation. The best example of this *mūrta* is the form of Dakṣiṇāmūrti which is referred to in *Kalittokai* and *Cilappatikāram*. In this form, He revealed the *Veda* and *Āgamas*.

Though the Lord assumes the manifestations, He transcends the universe. Even the *puranic* story that narrates the arduous but vain attempts of Brahma and Visnu (*Aṇupakṣa*) in search of His origin and end (literally His head and feet) indicates

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that He alone is the only transcendental Supreme Being.

Aṣṭamūrta

The Lord's eight-fold form *(aṣṭamūrta)* is a recurrent theme in the *Tirumuṟais*. It includes the five gross-elements, the sun and moon besides the manifold souls. The first seven are material products in which the Lord abides as the inner principle. He is also the inner ruler of the souls. Through this form, His omnipresence is symbolically conveyed. The concept of *aṣṭamūrta* is very ancient (Kandaswamy 1972: 34-5). It is noticed in the religion of the Indus Valley Civilization. *Paripāṭal* and *Maṇimēkalai* are the early extant Tamil literature to refer to this form. Kāḷidāsa also extols this form of Śiva.

Adhvāmūrti

The concept of God as *adhvamurti* is also worth mentioning *(Civañāṉacittiyār* 1:2:56-9, *Kantarkaliveṇpā* 60-2). *Adhva* literally means pathway or steps leading one to progress. The *Āgamas* mention six *adhvas*, viz., *mantra, pāda, varṇa, bhuvana, tattva* and *kāla* to be His manifestation. Thus he is known as *adhvamūrti*. Since He pervades all these six material products, they are figuratively attributed to be His form. Among the six *adhavas, mantra adhva* is His special form. So, He is also known as *Mantramūrti*. *Mantras* are the modifications of the pure matter *(suddhamāyā)*. They are meant for the contemplation of the devotees to secure happiness and release. Even among the *mantras*, the five constitute His significant form, since they are the primary ones emanating before all other *mantras* from *Suddhamāyā*. So, He is also known as Panca Brahma *mantra mūrti*. This form is hinted in *Maṇimēkalai* 27:91) also.

Realisation of God

The *Meykaṇṭa Śāstra (Civaprakāsam* pp.39-42) mentions two kinds of knowledge to be the means of realising God. They are the knowledge of the Divine Grace and the knowledge of the *Āgamas*. The first one is to be directly derived from God. He chooses the ripe soul to impart divine knowledge known as *Patiñāṉa* or *Sivañāṉa*. This is also known as *Tiruvarauḷñanam* as per the commentary of *Civappirakācam* which clearly mentions that the *Tēvāram* Trio, Karaikkalammai and others received this kind of divine knowledge. *Āgamāñana* is to be obtained as a result of a close study of the *Saiva Āgamas*. However, this is only indirect knowledge of God. The *Santānakuṟavars* are the receipients of this kind of *ñāṉa*.

The limitations of bookish knowledge are clearly pointed out in the Tamil devotional literature. The knowledge of the texts is of little use to the realisation of the Absolute. It is just like seeing a city in a map. *Tiruvācākam* declares that the bookish knowledge does not make one to apprehend the Reality. He is far away from the sixfold sources of knowledge (i.e. *pramāṇas)* which are like boats to cross the ocean of *Vedas* and *Āgamas (Ñāṉāmrutam* 55:24-7). He could not be adequately understood through the principles of epistemology. Intense devotion towards God is a preliminary requisite to realise Him. It is followed by the prescribed ethical preparations. The devotional hymnists have realised

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